

# What Is True Worship?

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Victor Paul Wierwille

I am sure that you have asked yourself many, many times as you've observed different religious groups, different churches, different denominations, just what is worship? Some churches have altars, they have candles, incense, holy water; other denominations have no symbols at all. You have certainly noticed so many variations that you have thought many times, "If that is the way they worship, why does another group worship so differently?" Each group may have a kernel of truth, but such diversity of religious ritual among Christian believers cannot all be in alignment with the Word.

What is true worship? The verses that are critically important to understand are spoken by Jesus Christ in John 4.

John 4:22-24:

Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews [Judeans<sup>1</sup>].

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.

Jesus Christ said, "Ye worship ye know not what." I believe that is true for most people. Everybody worships. The question is: Are we worshipping rightly? Do we know what, how, or why we worship?

Jesus Christ said, about worship, that "the hour cometh ...when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit [the word 'in' is the same Greek word translated 'by'; 'by spirit'] and in truth." Worship the Father how? You shall worship Him not by candles, not by altars, not by Bible reading, not by singing, but by the spirit. "In spirit and in truth" is the figure of speech *hendiadys*: two nouns used but one thing meant. "Spirit" is a noun and "truth" is a noun, the double noun being used to doubly emphasize that it is spiritually true, or truly spiritual. The Father seeks a true worshipper to worship thus—in spirit and in truth. If we can find out what it is to worship God by the spirit, we know how to truly worship.

The question is not what anybody thinks, but what does the Word say? There have been so many ideas brought to Christianity that it is often difficult for even Biblical scholars to distinguish between that which is genuine and that which is counterfeit. In other words, it is hard to separate that which is truly Christianity from that which is religion. Religion is what man has introduced. There is much religion in so-called Christianity, but true Christianity does not have one ounce of religion in it. Unless you know the difference between religion

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<sup>1</sup> The word "Jew" and its variations as used in the King James Version should always be understood as meaning "Judean," as that is what appears in the Biblical texts. The resent form "Jew" was not included in an English Bible until the eighteenth century.

and Christianity, you will become very confused. Christianity, in a nutshell, is what God wrought in Christ. Christianity is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

The Bible teaches that God is Spirit and we are to worship Him in spirit and in truth. Jesus declared this truth when he spoke to the Samaritan woman. In John 4:20 the woman said to Jesus, “Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.” Jesus replied in verse 21, “Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.” How then shall He be worshipped?

Philippians 3:3:

For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

This is true worship. The called of God are those who “worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus.” We rejoice in Christ Jesus, not in Jesus Christ. There is a great difference. We do not rejoice in the humiliated one, Jesus, but in the glorified Christ. Our rejoicing, our worshipping is in the resurrected Christ. Our rejoicing is not in that Jesus who was spit on or slapped or persecuted or derided. We rejoice that he was more than a conqueror, that he overcame and ascended up into heaven, that he is seated at the right hand of God, and that on the day of Pentecost he sent “forth this, which ye now see and bear,” as stated in Acts 2:33. Rejoice in Christ Jesus, the humiliated one who has been resurrected and has ascended into glory. To worship is to rejoice in Christ Jesus for what he did, not what we do, because the flesh is weak. Do not judge men by the flesh. Have no confidence, trust, reliance, nor believing in the flesh. The flesh is so weak that John 6:63 says that “the flesh profiteth nothing.” When we have confidence in the flesh, we must assess one man to be better than another on the basis of appearance. Yet, if men are born again of God’s Spirit, whose children are they? God’s! In God’s sight they are equally precious.

There are many things going on under the guise of Christianity which are nothing more than having “confidence in the flesh.” But we truly have our confidence in what God wrought in Christ Jesus. Christ Jesus made us presentable to worship God.

Colossians 1:12:

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet [adequate] to be partakers [to share fully] of the inheritance of the saints in light.

Matthew 15 gives an account of worship, but again it is not true worship.

Matthew 15:6-9:

<sup>6</sup>...Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.

<sup>7</sup>Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,

<sup>8</sup>This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me.

<sup>9</sup>But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of man.

Did their worship look genuine? Did they go through religious ritual? Judging by the flesh, we would have given them the stamp of approval. But what did God say? “...In vain they do worship me....” Why did they worship in vain? Because they were “teaching for

doctrines the commandments of men.”

Another record of this vain worship is found in Mark.

Mark 7:5-9:

<sup>5</sup> Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?

<sup>6</sup> He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me.

<sup>7</sup> Howbeit in vain do they worship me teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

<sup>8</sup> For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, *as* the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

<sup>9</sup> And he said unto them, Full well [with full knowledge] ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

What kind of worship is this? Vain worship; simply performing the tradition of men, a hollow act.

Romans 1:25:

Who [people] changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator,...

They worshipped man more than they worshipped God. Vain worship has been going on for a long time. The children of Israel wandered from God and worshipped in vain. In Acts 7 and Revelation 9 we see the record of the children of Israel rejecting the preaching of their man of God, Moses, and worshipping devil spirits.

Acts 7:40-47:

<sup>40</sup> Saying unto Aaron [the children of Israel said to Aaron], Make us gods to go before us: for *as for* this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot [know] not what is become of him.

<sup>41</sup> And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.

<sup>42</sup> Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven [devil spirits]; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices *by the space of* forty years in the wilderness?

<sup>43</sup> Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them:...

<sup>44</sup> Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen.

<sup>45</sup> Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David;

<sup>46</sup> Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.

<sup>47</sup> But Solomon built him an house.

Revelation 9:20:

And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:

Worshipping the Devil and devil spirits and everything related to them is worshipping in vain. Satan tried cajoling even Jesus Christ himself into vain worship.

Matthew 4:8 and 9:

<sup>8</sup> Again, the devil taketh him [Jesus Christ] up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

<sup>9</sup> And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

The greatest victory for the Devil would have been to have Jesus Christ worship him. As human beings, we have two, and only two, alternatives of worship—the true God and the Devil. If we worship the true God in spirit, we rejoice in Christ Jesus; we have no confidence in the flesh. If things surrounding us look black and society seems worse and worse, we do not get excited, but we stand on the promises of God and worship God in spirit and in truth. No good end can come to those who worship anything but the true God.

Revelation 19:20:

And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

This destruction can easily be avoided: we must worship God.

Revelation 22:9:

Then saith he unto them, See *thou do it* not: for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.

How are we going to worship God by the spirit if we are not born again of God's Spirit? It is impossible. If we are born again of God's Spirit, filled with the power of the holy spirit, we can worship the true God by the spirit. And to worship by the spirit we must operate a manifestation of the holy spirit. The manifestation of the spirit which produces true worship is speaking in tongues.

When we worship God by way of speaking in tongues, we speak directly to God.

1 Corinthians 14:2:

For he that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God:...

Speaking in tongues is speaking "the wonderful works of God."

Acts 2:11:

...we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

Speaking in tongues is magnifying God.

Acts 10:46:

For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God....

Speaking in tongues is praying perfectly.

Romans 8:26:

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us...

Speaking in tongues is giving thanks well.

1 Corinthians 14:17:

For thou verily giveth thanks well,...

Speaking in tongues is worshipping “in [by] spirit and in truth.” Speaking in tongues is true worship. God who is Spirit is communicating to His gift of holy spirit which is His new creation in me. In other words, God’s Spirit speaking to my spirit as evidenced by speaking in tongues is true worship. How beautiful true worship is and yet how misunderstood it has become!